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Brush and Pencil.

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ART IN LIFE.

IT SEEMS to me that when we speak of art we still are apt to have in our minds the too exclusive sub-divisions of easel-painting and sculpture-in-the-round; this, in spite of the "Arts and Crafts" agitation and the steady growth of interest in the subject, both in Europe and this country. It is hard to shake off any convention, and especially difficult to change or widen the meaning which has attached itself to a word. Our manufactures, and consequently the lives of the common people, have been grossly inartistic for so long that it is no wonder that all of us are unconsciously reluctant to apply the word to things which are near and around us in constant daily use. For the great mass of men are not able to collect and import, and consequently bring themselves into constant contact with things as beautiful as they are useful—what praise that is! the highest compliment that could be paid a chair or table, for instance—but have to take what is set before them, and very poor that is most of the time, so bad, indeed, that when they see a good thing they do not recognize it.

Few people realize, and no one can over-estimate the vicious effect on public taste of all these thousands of billions of ugly eye-insulting objects sown, like seeds of tare, the length and breadth of a nation like ours, through the marvellously cheap and rapid processes of modern reproductive machinery, and sold to vitiate the perceptions for the good and beautiful, as opposed to the bad and ugly, of men and women, and worse yet, of the more sensitive eyes of children. Ugly dress fabrics, hideous and uselessly befurbelowed hats for women, and loudly decorated upholstered and cheap furniture, are some of these flourishing weeds. To use a disagreeable but expressive comparison, it is said that workers among the criminal classes and the stolid, hopeless men who have sunken to the level of the "submerged tenth" in great cities, being forced to choose from the multitudes constantly before them those who will yield the most hopeful results from the labor and time expended, almost always begin with the children, for they have both quick perception for the new and good, and less to unlearn that is bad.

Right here comes in the great question of the architecture of school buildings, whether they shall any longer be built on the shoe-factory plan. (I mean the average shoe-factory existant to-day; for there is no reason why all factories should not be erected in simple good taste.) Also the question of school room decoration, and the careful arrangement by competent landscape-gardeners of the grounds about school-houses.

School-room decoration is already in the air, good being done where it is intelligently conducted, and harm being worked where the "decorators" are persons who, no matter how cultivated in other ways, are not competent to furnish rooms, as their own usually bear witness; lacking the special knowledge required to choose pictures and casts suitable, as to general effect for a school-room, and without the trained eye necessary in order to properly frame, mount and place them. I have seen too many school rooms "spotted" with pictures, selected solely as to subject; much worse off than before they were invaded.

By art in life we mean something practical, something that will bring tangible results, such as a good designer in a carpet factory brings to the coffers of his firm's treasury. Competition sometimes shows the value of artistic skill in all labor. It has been shown the other nations when their goods come into the field with the manufacturers of France.

Let us see what we can do by agitation and education, beginning the latter with ourselves, to help bring art into life. Our towns overflow with atrocities of form and color, mis-shapen houses and business blocks, usually mangled to suit the whims and stinginess of the owner; gaudy and offensive forms of advertising, surely before long to be suppressed by law, if only for their bad effect on neighboring real estate; the ill-bred over-furnishing of homes, tawdriness and waste instead of simplicity and elegance; the painting of the outside of houses, the arrangement of gardens and the use of shrubbery and flowers, the signs of shops and offices, the printing of everything, from newspapers up, our letter paper and our hand-writing thereon, our mostly barren and machine-made churches, the arrangement of show windows in all trades, our public monuments, there being not only new ones to put up, but old ones which by some hook or crook should mercilessly be pulled down. It is no honor to a man to be perpetuated by means of a shoddy thing.

There is absolutely no end to the realm of art; our dress, manners and daily order of living; our three meals a day with their multitudes of details of table service, linen, arrangement of food; color, quality and form of dishes, the decorations, arrangement, lighting, quiet and

ventilation of the room. That agreeable and necessary function affects all five senses, and art should penetrate every fibre of life.

J. M. BOWLES.



JOSEPH JEFFERSON'S ART.

MOST of us have seen Mr. Jefferson as an actor, but we find that there are fewer of us who know of his work in painting and his notable ability in the making of monotypes. Yet it is only to be foreseen that a man, in whom the nature of the artist is innate, and has so shown itself in his power as an high comedian, should manifest his art in many ways. Mr. Jefferson's aptness in giving intelligent expression to his conceptions was observed when he was but a child. And he possessed a certain quaintness that is told in Mr. Winter's "Life and Art of Joseph Jefferson." To quote Mr. Winter: "That rare comedian Henry J. Finn, going into the green-room one night at the Washington Theatre, dressed for the part he was to act, observed little Joe, wrapped in a shawl, sitting in a corner. After various flourishes of action and mimicry, for which he was admirable, he paused in front of the boy, and, not dreaming that such a tiny creature could make any reply, solemnly inquired, "Well my little friend, what do you think of me?" The child looked at him, with serious eyes, and gravely answered, "I think you are a very wonderful man."

He was given the opportunities to interpret in his association with the theatre at an age when children are most generally at school or in mischief. It was in this way that his artistic gifts were developed and his perceptive powers quickened. The refinement of his nature imbued his comedy, and, as might have been foreseen, caused him keenly to appreciate the beauty of creation and to try to express it truly.

Mr. Jefferson has worked much in oil, tempera, and in monotype. Some of his best and most recent work has been done in tempera, yet we see in the monotypes the subtlest expression of his art. In these we have some idea of his ability to draw, since, of necessity, drawing becomes evident in a monotype. His work in this medium is characterized by a simple and direct, yet in some wise, an intricate expression of his idea. This seeming paradox may be reconciled in this, that the detail evident in his creations is ever kept in abeyance, for these incidents are comprehended in the masses so well defined. This is noticable in "A Landscape" which we reproduce this month as the frontispiece. It shows a tangle that is characteristic of the woodland of Louisiana, whence Mr. Jefferson, undoubtedly, has taken his idea. Despite the detail, the conception and treatment are comprehensive.